

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #18

SEINE FISHERIES: A portion of the Coghill District will open to PURSE SEINE gear starting at 8:00 am on Thursday July 5. This opening is intended to increase fishing effort on Coghill River sockeye salmon. An aerial survey for portions of Eastern, Northern and Southeastern districts was conducted on Thursday, June 28. The next aerial survey for portions of Eastern, Northern and Southeastern districts is scheduled for the week of July 2. Escapement estimates are slightly behind anticipated numbers for the date. VFDA is currently in the process of conducting cost recovery for pink salmon in Port Valdez. Cost recovery pink salmon harvest on Monday, July 2 was approximately 120,310 fish with an average weight of approximately 4.39 pounds per fish and 16% female. Cost recovery pink salmon harvest on Tuesday, July 3 was approximately 46,000 fish with an average weight of 4.34 pounds per fish and 24% female. Cumulative VFDA cost recovery is approximately 1.74 million pounds through July 3, or approximately 40% of a final goal of 4.4 million pounds. It is anticipated that cost recovery fishing will resume on July 5 and 6, with a second potential commercial opening occurring on Saturday, July 7. Time and area for said opening will be announced at a later date. The next scheduled purse seine news release will occur at 2 pm on Friday, July 6.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to commercial purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice. No harvest was reported for the 84-hour fishing period that ended on Sunday, July 1.

The waters of Sawmill Bay, including the AFK Hatchery Terminal Harvest Area (THA) and Special Harvest Area (SHA), inside of the newly defined THA line from 60° 03.66' N. lat., 147° 59.11' W. long. to 60° 02.77' N. lat., 148° 01.00' W. long to 60° 02.76' N. lat., 148° 01.66' W. long. will open to commercial purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 84-hour period that ended on Sunday, July 1 is 13 king, 13,738 sockeye, 5,050 pink and 18,503 chum salmon with 67 deliveries reported.

GILLNET FISHERIES: Deep gear has been permitted in the Coghill, Eshamy, Montague, and Unakwik districts since Monday, July 2.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 5 for a 48-hour period. An aerial survey of the Bering River District was conducted last Friday under generally poor conditions. Another survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown later this week.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 5 for a 48-hour period. The cumulative sonar count to date is 897,582 fish whereas the minimum anticipated count to date is 506,307 fish. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 48-hour period that started on Monday, July 2 is 143,000 sockeye salmon with 440 deliveries reported. This compares to an anticipated harvest 54,700 sockeye salmon for this period. The Gulkana Hatchery sockeye salmon harvest contribution from the fishing period that closed on June 22 was 34%. For the week ending June 30, the Western Copper River Delta survey count was 5,411 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 4,968 sockeye salmon. Survey conditions on the Eastern Copper River Delta were fair to poor. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown later this week.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open for an 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5 with an additional 60-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Monday, July 9. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest for the period that closed on Sunday, July 1 was 43,900 chum salmon with 99 deliveries reported.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding waters of the WNH THA and SHA, and excluding the Granite Bay, Esther, and Bettles Bay Subdistricts, will open to commercial **drift gillnet** harvest for a 72-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5. The Granite Bay and Esther Subdistricts will open to commercial **drift gillnet** harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5. The Coghill District within College Fiord, north of a latitude line at 61°00.45'N. (Point Pakenham), will open to commercial **purse seine** harvest for 72-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5. **Effective from 8:00 am, Thursday July 5 to 8:00 am, Sunday, July 8, regulatory closed waters pertaining to the Coghill River, as specified in 5 AAC 24.350(6)(B)), will not be in effect. Commercial fishing will not be permitted within the bed or channel of the Coghill River at any stage of the tide.**

A total of 11,382 sockeye salmon were passed at the Coghill River weir yesterday. Cumulative passage to date is 15,666 sockeye salmon versus a minimum anticipated goal of 6,668 fish. Preliminary estimates of commercial harvest from the 60-hour period that closed on Saturday, June 30 are 114,700 chum and 56,200 sockeye salmon with 628 deliveries reported. Cumulative CPF harvest estimates to date are 949,700 chum and 191,600 sockeye salmon. As of July 3, PWSAC estimated 126,000-158,000 chum salmon for WNH broodstock escapement, which is near the cumulative anticipated goal of 162,000 fish for this date.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District, excluding the AGZ shoreward of a line of buoys in front of the barrier net, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 72-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5. The AGZ up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier seine will open to SET GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period. A 48-hour period is anticipated to begin on Monday, July 9 at 8:00 am. Harvest from the period that closed Sunday, July 1 was 21,700 chum, 227,200 sockeye, and 2,000 pink salmon with 1,182 deliveries reported.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine fishing for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5. No harvest was reported for the 24-hour fishing period that closed on Tuesday, July 3.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)).** Fish tickets have a “not sold/personal use” field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled PURSE SEINE salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Friday, July 6. The next scheduled GILLNET salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, July 7.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.

- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.